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## Grass is now greener for show's curator

**H**ow did a onetime landscaper become a successful artist, curator and inventor? In nine short years, Craig Bloodgood of Rockland, who grew up in Duxbury, has moved from designing gardens to creating art that moves and interacts with the people who come to see it.

As an artist, Bloodgood is known for his furniture, sculpture and interactive games. As a curator he organizes exhibits that are often three years in the making — like his current offering, "Gadgets, Gizmos and Games" at the Art Complex Museum in Duxbury.

Bloodgood's story is anything but typical and even involves some famous friends from the music world.

He didn't go to art school. When he graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at University of Massachusetts-Amherst in 1993, he started his own landscaping business.

"What I was doing wasn't exactly inartistic," he said. "I built patios, walkways and waterfalls. It was seasonal work, so I started playing around with wood in the winter and I decided that was what I wanted to do."

It didn't hurt to have some supporters who understand success.

Bloodgood explains, "I had some people who were backing me to the point that they commissioned me to do pieces of work probably before I should have been."

After some prodding, he names names. "I was landscaping for Joe Perry (of Aerosmith) and his wife, and I guess they were trying to tell me I should be an artist and not a landscaper, but they did it in a pretty nice way," he said.

The commission was a wake-up call for Bloodgood.

"You need a good kick to make that kind of change and you need someone you admire. I had worked for them for a long time and I learned that (Aerosmith's) approach to music was very different than I thought it was. It was really a businesslike approach. These guys went to their studios every day like they were going to the office.

And they sort of pushed me towards the art world, which I felt was something I needed to pay attention to. So I did."

Once he got started thinking of himself as an artist, Bloodgood said, he felt he had to work hard to catch up. "I just approached it like a job. I figured that since I started late, I might as well just work at it twice as fast and twice as hard. I have a studio in Rockland in an old shoe factory



Craig Bloodgood

called the Codman building, and I'm up there every Monday and Tuesday all day and whatever I can do on the weekends. If you can actually get into your studio three days a week, you're fine, that's a decent amount of

time. And then Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays I come down to the museum."

The two halves of his professional life work well together, he said.

"As an artist what I do is assemble elaborate things out of multiple parts and that's really what curating is like, too. I basically spend all of my time thinking about art or in some sort of art world, whether it's my own or something I am working on here (at the museum.)"

Being a curator is fairly new for Bloodgood. "I started out at the Ellison Center for the Arts, which is the Duxbury Art Association, and when they moved into their new building I took over as curator."

He joined the Art Complex Museum three years ago. "Gadgets, Gizmos and Games" is my first show as special projects curator."

So which job — artist or curator — does he like more? Bloodgood laughs. "Every artist I work with has a day job and this is mine. If I could just make my art, that would be my dream. I think any artist will tell you that is what they would want."

- JIM DORMAN

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